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THREE ROMANCES OF REAL LIFE.

YEARS ago, when I was quite a lad, I chanced to be weather-bound in the company of some persons eminent in literature at a certain inn in the Lake Country, and, in order to pass the time, it was proposed that each should write down the incident in fiction which had pleased or interested him the most. It so happened that I, for my part, set down a scene in *Ivanhoe*, which was also selected by one of my companions, a veteran novelist, and very great satisfaction it afforded me to find my fancy in the same groove with so great a man. But now I know that there was nothing surprising in the coincidence. What seizes our imagination in youth, retains its hold as long as there is ought to hold by: when the books of the Sibyl became fewer and fewer, they were sold at the same price; but as our recollection of the past fades and fades, what we do remember grows dearer and dearer to us—just as when death, through age, makes havoc among our friends, we cling more closely to the survivors.

Unless in the very exceptional case of a man's being suddenly struck with the truth of some new religion, there are for the mature mind no surprises. The sublimest *Cliquot* can never touch our educated palate with such rapture as was afforded to it in boyhood by the first draught of ordinary champagne; and if, as in the case of fiction, it was *Cliquot* with which we were favoured at that early period, how is it possible that any after-draught can compare with it! The capacity of the palate for pleasure, however, is said to be lasting; how much more, therefore, in the case of the pleasures of the imagination, which are so fleeting, is that first taste the most delicious, and likely to endure in the memory. The first draught of iced champagne, the first kiss of Love, the first appearance in print—what after-pleasures of the same sort can vie with these? (The first cigar, indeed, is generally not so agreeable as some later ones, but this is the exception which proves the rule.) Who can ever forget his first perusal of *Robinson Crusoe*? especially if he got punished for it,

as I did, for enjoying that admirable narrative during school-time, in the hour set apart for the study of *Cæsar*. I had no particular objection to *Cæsar*; on the contrary, I rather liked him, as a classic, because he was comparatively easy. But a boy who can give up *Robinson Crusoe* to read about the Gallic War, without a moral struggle, is not a boy—he is the head of a college in embryo. That lonely island, that charmingly snug cavern, that summer residence (to which I thought him so imprudent to venture)—how they still live in our memory, though we may have since seen half the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them! How infinitely greater is the magic of genius than the dull force of facts!

And yet facts, or what one takes for facts, have themselves considerable power over the imagination. Baron Trenck (a near relation of Baron Münchhausen, I'm afraid, by-the-bye) is always a hero with boys; so are Edward the Black Prince and Richard the Lion-hearted; so are Dick Turpin and Jack Sheppard. They have begun to 'find out' Charles I., but he has still his devotees, and has not lost a female admirer yet; the young Pretender (thanks to fiction, however, rather than fact) is also a great favourite. Queen Bess has lost ground in the affections of youth, which is the case, too, with her rival, Queen Mary. These great people had all more or less of interest for me; but it was in the by-ways of history and biography that I found my favourites. The violet of one's own finding is said to be sweeter than a whole bunch of the same flowers which is held up by another for our gratification, with a 'Do smell them; are they not sweet?' And so it is with all other pleasures that we discover for ourselves.

Three Romances of Real Life, in particular, culled from its by-ways, have always taken firmer hold upon my imagination than much more famous incidents in the high-road of history. I will call the first *A King for an Hour*, though in reality the period of sovereignty enjoyed by the hero was not so protracted. If you look in the *Gazetteer* for 1754, you will find a short account of this short

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reign. But how are you to get this *Gazetteer*? It is not to be found at the club, for I have ransacked the library there in vain for it; and what is not to be found at the club is (at my age) not worth looking for elsewhere. I would give something to see the narrative in print, which once so forcibly struck my fancy, that the impress still exists there, after the lapse of forty years. Has anybody got such a thing as a *Gazetteer* for 1754? In the meantime, and pending the loan of it, let me try and recollect the facts.

On the 11th of December 1754, at eight o'clock in the morning, the Dey of Algiers was distributing pay to his soldiers in the court-yard of his palace. The Grand Treasurer was with him, besides his secretaries and the usual divan; and the number of soldiers was about three hundred. It was understood that these were all unarmed, as it was their custom to be on such occasions (though there was no suspicion of any disaffection among them); and when one of them, after receiving his pay, and kissing the Dey's hand, suddenly drew a dagger, it produced a great sensation in the court. When, instead of repenting him of this indiscretion, and putting it back again in his girdle, he proceeded to sheathe it in the Dey's breast, and then to shoot him with a pistol, the excitement—and especially the Dey's excitement—redoubled. Yet, curiously enough, nobody stirred, except himself. He rose, and 'walked a few yards'—I well recollect the bald description of the writer in that *Gazetteer*—'calling out to his attendants: "Among so many of you, can you not destroy such a villain as this?" and then dropped.' If His Highness could not do more, it is scarcely imaginable to conceive how he could have done much less; but his assassin was as prompt in action as the other was slow; he no sooner had his victim on the ground, than he snatched off the Dey's turban, clapped it on his own head, and seated himself on the throne, with his arms akimbo. In the meantime, a friend of this audacious character had lodged a pistol-ball in the High Treasurer's collar-bone, given him two sabre-cuts over the head, and cut his right hand off; while four more conspirators—for they were only six in all—were 'hard at work with their pistols and sabres' among the company generally. In a recent American description of a free fight, we read that 'crowbars and other sedatives' were promptly used; and the pistols and sabres seem in this case also to have had a narcotic influence, for the company actually listened with patience, during all these anarchical proceedings, to a speech from the throne, a sort of programme issued by the new Dey, respecting the system of government that would be pursued in future (for the man on the throne had an idea that the virtue of sovereignty lies in what it sits on, and really imagined that he was firmly seated in that supreme power which he had himself shewn to be so precarious even in a legitimate possessor of it). He told them that he was henceforth about to govern the country on good principles, and especially that he would declare war against a good many people who fancied that no such danger was hanging over their heads. 'The country is at peace,' said he, 'with a

good deal too many;' and he especially bade them to take notice that he was a sovereign 'who would do justice to all,' at which observation he brandished his sword about his head in what was, doubtless, felt to be a significant manner.

Then he ordered the drums to beat, and the cannon to be fired, to give notice to the city of a changed dynasty. While this was being done, one of the chieftains, or messengers of the palace, took heart of grace, and suddenly snatching up a carbine, shot the usurper dead; at which action everybody seemed to recover from their stupor, and the work of cutting his five accomplices to pieces, after the eastern manner, at once commenced. Even Ali Bashaw, the new Dey, acknowledged that if this audacious rebel had kept his seat but a few minutes longer, and until the cannon were fired, the government would have been subverted. Never was treason on such a humble scale so near success. These six men were the sole conspirators; but the inaction of the surrounding soldiery (to whom they themselves belonged) is explained by their ignorance of the extent of the plot, and their fear of being supposed to be mixed up in it. As it was, the chief rebel was the shortest Dey on record—a king for a quarter of an hour.

The second historical event which took my youthful fancy was one which, through the medium of fiction, has been made of late years more familiar to the general public than it was in my time; but still there will be many who are unacquainted with it. To Louisiana, in the beginning of the last century, came an old German emigrant, with his only daughter, and settled there. She was young, and very beautiful, and attracted much attention, especially that of one Dauband, an officer of the colony, who so ingratiated himself with her father that, after a time, they kept house together. This officer had been in Russia; and what first struck him, upon seeing the young lady, was the very remarkable resemblance which she bore to the late wife of the Czarowitz Alexis, son of Peter the Great. The history of this princess had been a very sad one. Though a high-born lady, and sister-in-law to the Emperor Charles VI., she had been treated by her husband with as much brutality as though she had been his slave. He had attempted on more than one occasion to make away with her by poison; and at last he had struck her with such violence, when far gone with child, that he had caused the death both of herself and her infant. All the courts of Europe had gone into mourning for her, and everybody but her husband had pitied her unhappy fate. After a great lapse of time, the Czarowitz himself died; and to Dauband's watchful eyes it seemed that the intelligence of that prince's decease was received by his fair fellow-lodger with such suspicious interest and excitement, that he taxed her with being in truth that exalted but unhappy lady, whom all the world held to be dead and buried. If such were the case, he declared himself devoted to her service, and prepared to at once sacrifice his prospects in the colony, in order to escort her to Russia.

Then Charlotte Christina Sophia de Woolfenbüttel (for such had been her maiden name) narrated her pitiful story. She was indeed the personage he had imagined her to be, and had made use of a pious fraud to escape from the cruelties of her late husband. The blow that had been given to her

had almost caused her death (as it undoubtedly did that of the heir of All the Russias, whom she carried within her), but she had in truth recovered from it. By help of the Countess Königsmark, mother of Marshal Saxe, she gained over the women of her bed-chamber, so that it was given out she was no more, and a funeral was arranged accordingly. Then, being conveyed to a secret place, she was carefully tended, and, when strong enough, removed, in the guise of a servant-girl, to Paris, under the guardianship of a trusty German servant, who passed as her father; and finally from France to Louisiana. Having heard her story, Dauband renewed his devoted offer to furnish the means of her return to that sphere from which she had fled under such pitiable circumstances; but the young widow thanked him, and said that the only service she required of him was, that he should maintain an absolute secrecy regarding her past, and conduct himself towards her exactly as he had hitherto done for the future. He endeavoured to obey her in both respects, but his affection for her was stronger than his loyalty; he was young and handsome, as well as impressionable: and perhaps the ex-princess, on her part, was not sorry when, her pretended father dying, and it becoming no longer possible for Dauband and herself to be under the same roof without reproach, he offered himself to her as a husband. If she had really renounced all thoughts of resuming her rank, he argued, why should she not wed an honest man, who loved her? Though not a queen, in him she should ever have a devoted subject. She consented; and in so doing afforded one of the strangest examples of vicissitude of fortune that history has recorded—the marriage with a humble officer of infantry of one who had been destined for the throne of Russia, and whose sister was actually occupying that of Austria. The marriage was a happy one, and bore fruit in an only daughter. After ten years, Dauband, being troubled with some disorder which the practitioners in Louisiana could not cure, removed with his wife and child to Paris, to get the best medical advice, and, on his recovery, solicited and obtained from government an appointment in the Isle of Bourbon. While in Paris, the wife and daughter went to walk in the Tuilleries, and, conversing in German, were overheard by Marshal Saxe, who stopped to consider them. Madame Dauband's embarrassment confirmed his suspicions, and his recognition of her was complete. She drew him aside, and persuaded him to promise secrecy. He called on her, however, the next day, and often afterwards; and when she had departed for Bourbon, informed the king his master of what he had discovered. Orders were sent off to the island that the greatest respect should be paid to her; and the king of Hungary was also made acquainted with the position of his aunt. He sent her a letter inviting her to his court, but on the condition that she should quit her husband, which she refused to do. In 1747, Dauband died, having been preceded to the grave by his daughter; and the widow came to France, with the intention of taking up her residence in a convent; in place of doing so, however, she lived in great retirement at Vitri, about a league from Paris, where she died in 1772. What strange experiences must that old lady have had to tell, if it had pleased her to do so, and how she would have astonished any quiet

tea-party by commencing an anecdote with, 'When my father-in-law, Peter the Great,' or, 'When my husband the Czarowitz of Russia!'

The third romance of real life that I have in my mind is not connected with such high-placed folks as deys and czars, but only concerns itself with a simple count. Moreover, it is denied by some good papists, who say that the Holy Father was incapable of the generous (and indeed exceedingly liberal) action imputed to him in the matter. However that may be, there is at Erfurb, in Thuringia, a monument in stone by which the event in question is recorded. In the beginning of the thirteenth century, a certain Count Gleichen was taken in a fight against the Infidel, and carried by the Turks into slavery, where he suffered many hardships for years. In this unhappy condition, the daughter of his master—as in the better known case of Lord Bateman—fell in love with him, and promised to effect his release, if he would pass his word to marry her. Unlike his lordship, the count was not a bachelor, and honourably confessed at once that the arrangement, however attractive, was impossible, because he had a wife and children at home. 'That is no argument,' replied the young lady gravely; 'the custom of our country allows a man several wives.' The count, therefore, who probably thought he had done all that was expected of him in the way of conscientious explanation, then passed his word to make her his wife; and Gulnare (if that was the lady's name) exerted herself to such good purpose that she procured his escape, and sailed away with him to Venice. At that place, he found one of the messengers who had been despatched in search of him in all directions, who informed him that his wife was well, though inconsolable for his absence. He was a loving husband, and had wished no harm to his lady; but, as the case stood, he was placed in a pitiable dilemma. Fortunately, Rome was handy, and off he went, and threw himself at the feet of the pope, who was at that time held even more infallible by the religious public than he is now. 'After he had ingeniously narrated,' says Bayle's *Dictionary* (the translator of which should surely have written 'ingeniously'), 'what he had done, the pope granted him a solemn dispensation to keep both his wives;' thus saving him from the guilt of bigamy, and of breaking his word, and making him as comfortable as the thought of what No. 1 at home would say of it all, permitted him to be. The most curious part of the whole story, however, is, that No. 1 received No. 2 with the most affectionate welcome; and No. 2, on her part, 'answered very handsomely her civilities.' She herself proved barren; 'but she loved tenderly the children which the other wife bore in abundance.' *There are no such wives now-a-days as No. 1*, is the observation that will be made by most husbands upon contemplating the Erfurb monument. No. 2, as having been a princess, or something equivalent to it, in her own country, wears a marble crown; but it is certainly the other who is most worthy of a mark of honour. Imagine the horror of Mrs Jones in British Thuringia, if Captain and Adjutant Jones should procure his release from captivity in Abyssinia (let us say) by similar means! Would she feel grateful to the copper-coloured nymph, 'to whose good offices she was indebted for the return of her dear husband,' and even 'entertain for her a particular kindness?' I fear not. The adventure

of Count Gleichen is not only remarkable in itself, but without a parallel in the good-fortune of its (domestic) issue.

DEVELOPMENT.

Lucretius, in his poem on the *World*, perhaps charms us most when he tells us of primeval man. Many who treat of the subject now-a-days advance on scientific grounds the views he has unfolded in his noble and musical verse. Men, according to him, were once more akin to the gorilla, with larger bones than now, and firmer thews. Such they wandered through the woods as wild beasts, eating the acorn or the berry from the bush, with the brook to quench their thirst, the tree to provide them shelter. Now with stones and sticks they chased the deer, now they hid themselves in holes in fear of some beast of prey. But by degrees they came to make huts, and warmed them with clothing and fire, and wives and children tamed the rugged hearts of men. So they cared not to see them hurt, and with signs and noises bade their fellows live in peace with them. Thus society arose, and with it language.

But whilst Lucretius has thus caught the idea of development in humanity, and exquisitely worked out its details in his verse, no such idea glimmers through the great chaos of falling atoms whence his universe arose. 'Falling for ever and aye,' and by some side-wind entangled at last, out of all possible entanglements arose our world. So fabled he, for with his godless creed he could not rise to the idea of an Allwise Creator moulding from chaos, by unchanging and eternal methods, the all-various world we see. To us it appears the noblest stretch of science that it has revealed the same Infinite hand working in all space by a few simple rules; and not only so, but through all past time fulfilling all good on the same patient plan. Not, as man likes to fancy, with sudden surprises and great catastrophes, but by slow and ceaseless changes does the work proceed.

We propose, then, to consider awhile this great doctrine of development—development in matter, in the seats of life, and development of life itself.

To Herschel, perhaps, we owe the first clear enunciation of the principle. Amongst the various objects observed by him in his gigantic telescopes were the nebulae or cloudy stars. Many such nebulae can be seen by the naked eye, as the *Asses' Crib* in the constellation of the *Crab*, the cluster in the sword-handle of *Perseus*, or in *Orion*—

The single misty star
Which is the second in a line of stars,
That seem a sword beneath a belt of three.

The telescope had soon shewn many of these to be but clusters of faint stars, and it was natural to suppose that in larger instruments the others would appear so too. But, on trial, Herschel found it otherwise. He employed telescopes far more powerful than those before used; yet, whilst in some nebulae the faint haze of light did resolve itself into tiny stars, many were as cloudy as before. Thus, Herschel conjectured that these nebulae were clouds of luminous gas. Herschel was not the man to let a conjecture alone. What results follow from it? Are these results true or false? Let us consider it awhile.

In such a nebula, the mutual attraction of the parts would slowly produce condensation, and so at

last a star might be formed. Can we witness such a process? It is too slow indeed for us to detect such condensation as is going on; but Herschel pointed out what seemed to be the various stages of the process. Here and there, as in *Orion*, were vast shapeless masses of this nebulous matter, the raw material, in fact, from which worlds are formed. Elsewhere the same was somewhat condensed and rounded, as the nebula in *Andromeda*; other nebulae shewed a further stage in a bright point, which seemed a star, circled with a faint halo of light. The conclusion was therefore drawn, that all stars were once nebulae, which, under the action of the laws we now see, had contracted and cooled into the sun that guides and fosters us, or the planet that sustains us.

Whilst Herschel was thus led to frame his *Nebular Hypothesis*, the great astronomer Laplace was led to similar conclusions from very different facts. Any one can convince himself, by the help of his eyes alone, that the earth turns on its axis, the moon goes round the earth, and the earth and other planets go round the sun, all in the same direction; and when the telescope was employed, it was further seen that the sun and the planets turn on their axes in the same direction too. What explanation could be given of these facts? Laplace had shewn that this arrangement contributes to the stability of our system. But whence did this arrangement arise? Here the nebular hypothesis stepped in, and readily explained it all. If we imagine a vast nebula slowly rotating, all the bodies into which it condenses will possess motions and rotations in the same direction as the original nebula. The nebular hypothesis, suggested by the phenomena of cloudy stars, was thus found to explain the arrangement of our solar system; whilst it no less readily accounted for the central heat of the earth, imagined by most as the cause of volcanoes and land-raising forces.

But with all these arguments to recommend it, the nebular hypothesis found little favour. In the first place, it was but a hypothesis after all, explaining in a simple way many dissimilar facts, yet not to be subjected to a close and searching trial, like, say, the law of Universal Gravitation, about which we can ask of nature a thousand questions, all to be answered in the affirmative. So, and not without reason, those who admitted nothing into science that could not be fully tried, kept this like a *Peri* waiting without. Then, too, our English world, not so cautious about truth, felt the popular cry. It was said, rightly or wrongly mattered not, that Laplace was an atheist, and his hypothesis no better than its author. We, whom the sight of this infinite universe, composed of infinite parts, all held in unswerving obedience to supreme law, fills with reverence for Him who rules it all, would not presume to think in what way He should have formed the whole. Yet those who then lived believed it needful for His glory that this creation should have taken place in sudden and tremendous steps; all contrary to the law of His working which we now see. Holding, therefore, the traditions of men, they forgot how men should deal with truth; and if any man professed to believe this or like hypotheses, then they railed at him with cruel names, and held him up to derision and hatred. This has now almost passed away; still, for many years, the nebular hypothesis was generally held in little esteem. At last the few

who still clung to it seemed to have no hold left. The nebula in Orion was one of its strongest points. Dim and weird it shone like an uncouth monster's head with curved branches streaming from it, when seen in telescopes of smaller size; equally uncouth and cloudy it appeared in larger ones. But at last, in 1846, Lord Rosse's telescope with its splendid mirror was directed to it, and in this the smooth milky light seemed to curdle into stars. This seemed a death-blow to the nebular hypothesis: all nebulae were henceforth to be considered but clusters of stars.

So the world supposed; but in 1864, Mr Huggins directed his spectroscope to a nebula in Draco. At first, he imagined that the instrument was out of order, for, instead of the rainbow spectrum, with which we are all so familiar, and which the stars and sun shew, there was a single line of light. But more careful examination confirmed the first observation, and proved that the light of the nebula was such as is given out by ignited gases at low pressures. Other nebulae, on examination, told the same tale; and Herschel's surmise was proved beyond dispute.

But how can a system like our own be evolved out of this vast fiery cloud we call a nebula? By the simple processes of cooling and contracting. There are, however, two great principles involved in the process, which we will briefly explain. One is, that bodies which rotate about an axis will rotate more rapidly if their parts be drawn nearer to that axis. For example, after washing our hands, we pull up the plug in the basin, giving the water a slight twirl round by a farewell dip of the fingers, in order to clear the scum off the edge. As the water runs out through the plug-hole, we must all have noticed how the whirlpool revolves faster and faster as its parts draw nearer the centre. Or, to take another illustration: let us pass a thread through a ring, and hold the ends of it in our two hands. If we bring our hands near together, and make the ring whirl round, we can get it to fly round pretty steadily in a large circle. Now, if we separate our hands, still holding the thread fast, we shall make the ring fly round in smaller and still smaller circles, which we shall find it describe more and more rapidly. So a vast nebula, revolving but slowly at first, as it contracts will spin faster and faster. Then another principle comes into play. If I whirl a stone round in a sling, and do not hold the string tight, the stone will fly off. If I twirl a mop round, the water in it flies off. So the outer parts of the revolving nebula have to be held tight by the central parts, to prevent their flying off; and at last, as the rotation becomes more rapid, a time will come when the tendency to fly off just equals the pull which the mass of the nebula can exert. The outer part will then no longer be drawn in, but will remain as a separate body revolving round the nebula, and gradually becoming more and more separate from it as the central parts still further contract. This outer portion will form a planet. The same process will again take place as the central parts further contract; and thus a series of planets will be produced, with a central mass condensed into a sun.

Again, consider what takes place in each of these portions. Each of them, when detached, will rotate on its axis once in the time it moves round the central body, just as my house rotates

once on its axis, as it moves round the earth, in a day. As this is a point that is often misunderstood, it may be well to dwell upon it. Suppose, if possible, that all the earth were annihilated, and my house left alone, it would turn round once in twenty-four hours—to-night it would be turning its foundations to the sun, and to-morrow the sun would shine in successively at the different windows, just as it has done to-day. Or if, when standing looking at the sun, the whole world disappeared, I should find my body slowly turning round to the left; and do what I could, I should have turned my back on the sun in twelve hours—in twelve hours more to be brought face to face with him again. Thus the portion of nebula that forms the earth, when first detached, spun on its axis once in a year. But it, as well as the central mass, went on contracting, and so spun faster and faster, till at last it spins once in a day, instead of once in a year. Some, too, of these detached portions, if large, would, on contracting, leave portions behind, which would form satellites, revolving round them.

There will doubtless be many ways in which these outer portions will separate. If the great nebula were perfectly regular in its composition, all its parts rotating regularly round its centre, as the central body contracted, we should have a series of rings left surrounding the central mass. These would cool down into flights of small planets or satellites. Such a condition has apparently twice occurred in the history of our system. Once, after the giant Jupiter had been thrown off, our central sun, containing, as yet unborn, Mars, Earth, Venus, and Mercury, contracted so regularly as to leave a giant ring. Such a ring could not easily break at a point and run up into a ball, but would break at many points, and curdle up into a number of small separate bodies. Thus our nebulous ring would be changed into a flight of asteroids, such as we find filling up the gap between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. So, too, Saturn, in the process of contracting from being a detached portion of the nebula, after having thrown off several satellites, became so regular in his rotation as to leave a great ring behind him, which has condensed into what are believed to be great flights of little moons.

But this regularity is the exception, not the rule, in nature, and oftenest the outer parts of the central body would form a protuberance on one side of the central mass. As the whole contracted, such a portion would become more distinct; and just as some sea-side pool at high tide seems but a bay, yet, as the tide goes down, its connection with the sea becomes less and less, till at last a sandy bar severs them, so would this protuberance gradually be separated from the rest. Could we see a nebula in this stage of its history, we should see the central body of hazy light somewhat brighter at its centre, with the detached portion of a crescent shape, embracing more or less of its circumference. If, now, as the contraction still went on, this crescent mass did not condense, it would go round and round the central body, ever turning the hollow of the crescent towards it, just as the moon ever turns the same face to the earth. For just as my house rotates once on its axis in the time it goes round with the earth, and so ever keeps its foundations towards the centre of the earth, so it would be with this detached mass. Of course, if, without damaging its integrity, I could

make my house turn on its axis faster, say once in twenty-three hours, it would tilt over to the east, and in the course of some twelve days or so, have inverted itself, and directed its chimney-pots downward. Or, to turn to our illustration of the forlorn mortal from under whom the earth had disappeared, whom we left slowly turning before the sun. He finds it pleasanter to face the sun, than to look away from him, yet inexorable laws make his body rotate once each twenty-four hours as before. How would the wise man act? Simply thus: when facing the sun, he would stretch his arms out, and stretch his legs apart. He would then rotate less rapidly, and more slowly turn away from the sun. At once when the sun was lost to view, he would wrap his arms close round him, and straighten his legs together. By what we have shewn above concerning the contracting nebula, he would then rotate more rapidly, and more speedily bring his face round again to view the sun. So with our detached body. It would contract, and so gain in rotation, bringing the foremost cusp of its crescent nearer to the central body, and swinging the hinder cusp further off. With several such attendants, the whole nebula would assume the appearance of a vast whirlpool, such as is seen in the so-called Spiral Nebulae.

Such results as these, of course, must be received with caution, as probable, not certain. Still, it is interesting to see how many different facts are explained by this hypothesis. Spiral nebulae have been put down by more than one high authority as due to forces unknown in our system—we see that they are rather the natural results of nebular condensation. One point we may notice, namely, that the denser the materials of a nebula, the more rapid would its condensation be. A hydrogen nebula would outlast, as a nebula, one formed of iron vapour. Thus the nebulae we now see are probably of very flimsy materials, in which, as motion and condensation would be slow, the spiral formation would be well developed.

But the great test of theory is numbers. That the Theory of Gravitation explains the shapes of the orbits and the general motions of the planets, is slight evidence in its favour, compared with the prediction made years beforehand, that on such a day, at such an hour, minute, and second, the position of the moon will be such and such, to be verified by the best instruments to the last second. Can we hope to apply numbers to these theories of wild oceans of flame? Not very conclusively, indeed, but still something can be done.

Suppose we trace back the history by analysing the present condition of our system. Heat our earth till it has twice its present diameter—science teaches us that it would then rotate in four days. Heat it till it has 19 times its present diameter—it will then rotate in 361 days. Thus, if the earth were expanded to a little more than 19 times its present diameter, it would rotate once in a year, whilst its average density would be about $\frac{1}{7000}$ of its present density.

But when the earth just ceased to be part of the central mass, it turned with it once in a year, rotating on its own axis also once in a year. We have therefore got a rough estimate of its density when just detached from the central body; and if we obtain similar results for the other planets, though they may be absolutely far from exact, yet relatively the danger of error is not so great.

The original densities of Mercury, Venus, the Earth, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, when thus calculated (allowance being made for satellites), will be proportional to the numbers 113, 25, $1\frac{1}{2}$, 4, $\frac{1}{2}$, and $1\frac{1}{10}$.

Suppose, then, that the density of the exterior part of the nebula when it just reached to Mars is represented by 4, what should it be when, the Earth and Venus being left behind, it has contracted to the size of the orbit of Mercury? The diameter of Mercury's orbit is about one-quarter of that of the orbit of Mars. If the nebula were of the same shape, it would occupy $\frac{1}{16}$ of the bulk, and its new density should be 64 times its former, or represented by the number 256. But it is pretty certain, from what we see of nebulae, that when our central sun as a nebula extended to the orbit of Mars, its thickness would not be increased in proportion, so that the contraction to the size of the orbit of Mercury would not be attended with much diminution in thickness. If it were attended with no diminution of thickness, it would occupy only $\frac{1}{16}$ part of the bulk, and would be but 16 times as dense, in which case its density would be represented by 64. The truth evidently lies between these extreme cases. Now, the density, calculated from the present condition of Mercury, should be 113, which lies between these two extreme densities of 256 and 64. Thus we see that the size, density, and rotation of Mercury and Mars are connected by such relations as we should expect had they both once formed parts of the same vast nebula.

Again, if we compare Venus and Mercury. Suppose our nebula to have this density of 113 in its outer parts when filling the orbit of Mercury, what will it be when swollen to fill that of Venus? The orbit of Venus is nearly twice that of Mercury. If the nebula spread out without increasing in thickness, it would fill nearly four times the space, and be about a quarter as dense as before, its new density being represented by the number 33. If it increased in thickness as in diameter, its new density would be 18. We see that the present condition of Venus gives 24 as its original density. Now, 24 lies between 18 and 33 about as 113 lies between 64 and 256. Thus the nebular hypothesis agrees strikingly with what we should expect the original densities of Mercury, Venus, and Mars to have been when first thrown off.

The Earth, Jupiter, and Saturn, however, shew densities far too low; but this, after all, is in accordance with theory, though not capable of so easy an explanation. It indicates the fact, that they were originally detached in portions of a less compact shape than the planets before considered, probably of a crescent shape, embracing a large part of the circumference of the central mass. They would, therefore, not so readily coalesce into a single mass, but outer portions would be left behind, forming their satellites, as is the case.

The reader may perhaps have felt some difficulty in following the above reasoning. The point to be noticed is, that the present densities, bulks, and rotations of the planets are such as agree with the idea that they have been formed from portions successively left behind by a contracting nebula. When detached, they must have rotated in the time in which they encircled the central body. If we imagine them expanded, their present rotation would slacken, and we can calculate how

much they must be swollen out in order to rotate once, in the time in which they encircle the sun. The larger they swell, the less their density, and we thus obtain the densities of the different planets when detached. These, we find, are related to each other, as they should be, supposing the nebular hypothesis true.

Of course, these relations may be accidental coincidences; yet to us it appears more likely that they are due to our system having really arisen from the contraction and cooling of a great nebula.

But whilst this nebula has thus developed into our system, other portions of the great original nebula, mother of nebulae, have fared far otherwise. Whilst the bulk has condensed into sun, planets, and moons, the fragments have cooled down into stones of all sizes—'cosmic dust,' as it has been called—against which we are ever striking in our course through space; witness the showers of shooting-stars. In fact, so full does space appear of these leavings, that, but for our atmosphere, which against them is an armour of proof, we should live in constant danger of being shot by a meteorolite. Other stray portions of less dense material still retain some of their pristine heat, and ever and anon, attracted by our sun, visit us as comets. There is, in fact, no reason to believe that real nebulae are all so very far off; many, possibly, are as near as many of the fixed stars, though this is a point not easily tested.

The nebulae, then, that we see are worlds or systems yet in their infancy, or perhaps not capable of any maturity—too flimsy to cool down into aught substantial enough to be the habitation of life. Still, the fact, that the light from nitrogen and other substances with us known chiefly in the gaseous state, is most conspicuous in the spectra of nebulae, does not prove that all other substances are absent, yet the slowness of motion proves more certainly how flimsy they are.

Wonderful indeed it is to think of this our great world, so varied in its arrangements, so suited to such a variety of life—the vast sea, with its currents, tides, waves, shoals, and deeps—the land, with wide plain or narrow dell—the mountain, parent of rivers—the rivers, Nature's ploughs to dig over the fat plains, and create new lands in the sea—the air, bearer of water, and a clothing for warmth—all these, by simple changeless laws, evolved from a fiery whirlpool! When man works, we see a thousand wheels spinning, watch the polished shafts moving to and fro, note a thousand busy levers plying, whilst the air resounds with the toil of busy workers. But in Nature is no such complexity, no elaborate preparations, no hand ever put in to tie broken threads, or introduce new shuttles; all comes forth led on by simple unchanging laws. When we see it, we say: 'Truly, this is the finger of God.'

CECIL'S TRYST.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—ON OUR HONEYMOON.

WEEKS went on, and my feelings with regard to Cecil's conduct grew less intense, and likewise my curiosity to know its cause. It remained as great a mystery as ever; but I was content to let time resolve it. Miss Brabant had returned to the Corinthum, and was playing my *Foot-page* to still crowded houses. She evinced no desire to see me, and the drama remained as it was, without those

finishing touches of which she had informed me it stood in need; but perhaps that had only been an excuse to compel me to bring Cecil to Laburnum Villa. He had not replied to the letter I had written declining his splendid gift, and I did my best to prevent my mind from dwelling on a subject that to me was as painful as it was perplexing. In this, circumstances assisted me. The success of my play had reversed the relations between myself and the managers. I found that they were not now so ceaselessly occupied but that they could acknowledge the receipt of a letter, and even write half-a-dozen for every one of mine. They vied with one another to secure my dramatic services, and I had quite as much work on my hands in that way as I could conscientiously perform. To do them justice, they did not exact from others a virtue to which they themselves were utter strangers, and thought the conscientiousness quite superfluous. What they desired was, not a good play, but *any* play by one who had already achieved popularity. I got three hundred pounds down—and the *down* is a very difficult thing to pluck out of a manager—for the *Pedlar's Pack*; which, therefore, realised, with the addition of what I had received for six nights' representation from the manager of the Hole-in-the-Wall, a grand total of L.301, 10s. I found Mr Magnus politeness, and Mr Coryton punctuality itself; and both of them to be very agreeable scoundrels.

But besides having my hands full of professional engagements, a subject for still greater congratulation claimed my attention. The happy day of my marriage with Eleanor, so long delayed, was now drawing very near, and I could think of little else. If ever wedded happiness could be counted upon, it surely could be so in my case; for though we were both so young, I had known my darling all her life, and loved her throughout it—first as brother, and then as lover. I had long come to the end of her faults, but every day I seemed to find in her some new flower of virtue. There were few preparations to make, for we were to occupy the same house as man and wife as that in which we already resided; the only difference being, that Nelly was now to be its mistress in place of Aunt Ben, though, of course, she was to live with us still. I wrote to Cecil to inform him of the date of the ceremony, and besought him to be present at it; for my own fervent happiness had melted my heart towards him. But he neither wrote nor came. This grieved us all, but more upon his own account than ours. We could not restrain our thoughts, though even to one another we never whispered: 'He is ashamed to come.' He sent no marriage present; but, greatly to my embarrassment, a very beautiful one arrived from Miss Brabant.

'Of course you will send it back to her,' said my aunt, looking very seriously at me over her spectacles. 'I call it the height of impudence, and most infamously bad taste on the part of your cousin!'

'My dear aunt,' said I, 'we know nothing certain to Ruth's discredit; and if we should chance to be doing her wrong by our suspicions, I should never forgive myself for putting such an insult upon her as you suggest. She has been exceedingly kind to me.'

'No doubt,' interrupted my aunt dryly. 'I can only say that if I were Eleanor'—And she cast a glance at that unfortunate young woman, which seemed to say: 'Arise, white slave, or be for ever

fallen! Assert yourself *now*, or be a spiritless and subjugated woman all your life.'

'Permit me to finish my sentence, my dear aunt,' said I, and it was the only occasion that I remember using sharpness to that excellent creature. 'It is to Miss Brabant solely, I was about to remark, that I owe my present success, and all the brightness of my professional future. Whatever injurious thoughts you may entertain about her, I must beg that you do not give them utterance, at all events in my presence. If appearances seem against her, that is no reason why I, of all men, should take her misconduct for granted. While it remains in doubt, you should give her, in bare justice, the benefit of that doubt—at all events, I shall give it her. If the gift had been sent to Eleanor' (and that it had not been so, and also that no letter accompanied it, were certainly circumstances that seemed to justify my aunt's suspicions), 'I should have insisted upon her acknowledging it, though I think she would have had the good taste and charity to do so of her own free will. As it has been sent to both of us, however, it is not necessary for her to write her own thanks, but I will convey them for her.'

Nothing more was then said about the matter; but before the post went out that evening, Nelly slipped into my hands a little folded note.

'Don't tell dear Aunt Ben,' she whispered; 'but send that to Ruth with yours.'

From that moment I felt more assured than ever that I was going to marry a sensible woman.

The wedding took place early in June; and leaving Aunt Ben in solitary state in Merton Square, we went to Switzerland for our honeymoon. This choice of locality was, as I believe, by no means influenced at the time by any association with Cecil. It is not likely that the recollection of the catastrophe to which he had been witness among those Alpine solitudes, should on such an occasion have attracted us towards them; yet no sooner did we find ourselves within the shadow of the snow-crowned hills, than it began to occupy my thoughts to an extraordinary degree. I do not wish to exaggerate the fact, but it is certain that, while she was alive, my poor cousin Jane had never excited half the interest in me that the remembrance of her awful fate awoke in the region of its occurrence. After all, and though I had been less kind to her than I could have wished to have been (or perhaps the reflection arose *because* of it), I was still her kin; and it was a grievous thought, and one that intruded on me like a nightmare, that somewhere in those wastes of snow and ice my own flesh and blood was lying, unburied, yet incorruptible. Of course I took good care to say no word of this to my bride; but the idea had taken such possession of my own imagination that it began to affect my spirits, and I had already resolved to pass over into Italy, in order, as I hoped, to get rid of so morbid a sensation, when a circumstance took place which caused it to recur to me with greater force than ever.

We were just sitting down to breakfast one morning in the common room of the hotel at Brieg, when (of all men to meet in such a region) who should walk in but Mr Clote, attorney and gentleman-at-law!

Even on one's honeymoon, one is glad to meet an acquaintance when one is far from home, and we both welcomed the old gentleman heartily enough.

'Have you been tearing up any more valuable law documents lately, my dear madam?' inquired he of my wife; and Nelly retorted by asking him whether his mind had yet given signs of decadence from exposure to the fresh air of the mountains, and the exercise that Swiss travelling must needs have entailed upon him.

'Well, yes, my dear young lady,' replied he frankly, 'it is softening under the circumstances you have mentioned, combined with female influence; for the fact is, I am travelling about with a young lady.—No, sir,' said he, turning round upon me sharply, as I lifted my eyebrows, 'she is not my wife, as you imagine; I daresay you wish she were. We all know the fable of the fox that had lost his tail, and how you bridegrooms affect to hug your gilded chains; but the fact is, she's my niece, Minna—a most terrible plague to me, but the only possession that my poor brother Tom had to leave behind him, and I was his residuary legatee. She keeps house for me—very well, I'm bound to say, and lets me do just as I like.'

'Then how was it she made you come to Switzerland, Mr Clote?' asked my wife mischievously.

'A client of mine fell ill at Geneva, and sent for me to what he thought was his death-bed: over-walked himself, I daresay, and lost his sleep through getting up to see the sun rise, as though the sun-set was not equally satisfactory. Well, I had to come, and as I could hardly leave Minna at home alone, I brought her with me. She loves climbing like a boy; but otherwise, there is not much fault to be found with her.—But here is Minna. Look at her boots!'

Miss Clote was a bright little blonde, with blue eyes twinkling with fun, and the wholesomest appearance generally; in her hand was an Alpenstock, for she had already been climbing something; and on her little feet a pair of such very stout boots, that I did not wonder that her uncle had called our attention to them. It was easy to see that these two relatives, apparently so unsympathising and even antagonistic, were on the best of terms with one another.

'I know she tyrannises over me,' explained the old gentleman, in apology for his abject submission to this fair enslaver; 'but then, it is only for a little while. Unlike *you*, Mr Fred., when I once put my foot on English soil, I am a free man again; *here*, I admit, I do indulge her a little. She is presently going to drag me up to the Eggischorn, to visit—what is it, Minna?—oh, the Märjelensee.'

'Why, that is close to the Alitsch glacier, is it not?' said I.

'My dear sir,' pleaded Mr Clote, 'how should I know? Ask Minna.'

Minna said it was; protested that there was nothing so well worth seeing as that elevated lake (subsequently compared by Mr Clote to a more familiar sheet of water, the pond at Hendon); and that the accommodation at the Eggischorn was perfect—'like a delightful picnic.'

My wife and I both listened to her with interest, but with very different feelings. It seemed to me, caught as I was just escaping from this melancholy district—at the very outlet of it—and thus reminded of the spectral scene which haunted me, that my eyes were doomed to look upon it as it really existed. If this were so, it was better to get it over at once, and in cheerful company.

When, therefore, Nelly said: 'O Fred., let us go with them,' without any recollection in her mind of the locality as being associated with poor Jane's catastrophe, I acceded to her request at once. I did not think it necessary to tell her why I did so; and acquiescence in a bridegroom being the most natural proceeding in the world, she suspected nothing.

On the first opportunity, however, which did not happen till evening—for the lawyer and my wife went up on horseback to the Eggischorn, while I and Minna the Indomitable walked—I told Mr Clote, that if it could be done without frightening the ladies, I should very much like to explore, on the morrow, the very spot where the accident to my cousin had occurred.

'That is all very well,' said the lawyer; 'but it can't be done without frightening *me*. To visit such a place as you describe, I should require not only to be roped to any number of guides, but to the hotel itself; and even so, I should prefer it to be a bigger one.'

'We will, of course, take guides and ropes,' said I; 'but I am quite sure, from poor Cecil's description of the place, that we need run into no danger; that he saw all was done that could be done, I have no doubt; but still, I feel that it would be some sort of satisfaction to me to gaze on the very grave-mouth that received my cousin, and to convince myself with my own eyes that it is not possible to rescue her poor body from the sharp teeth of frost and snow.'

Mr Clote shuddered. 'It is a most pious wish of yours, Mr Fred., no doubt; but I really see no sort of obligation—at all events on *my* part'—

'I'm not so sure of that,' interrupted I gravely: 'you are poor Jane's trustee; it is your duty to take every reasonable means of convincing yourself of the fact of her demise. The body has never been discovered; how do you know she is dead? Suppose the crevasse were to be thoroughly explored, and the body not found at all!'

'Upon my life,' said Mr Clote, 'that's quite a new view of the matter. I think there's something in that. Dear me! To be sure I have got nobody's word for your poor cousin's death but that of a parcel of foreigners, and of her brother himself, and *he's an interested party*. He's got her four thousand pounds, you know. Of course, I would take his word on such a point in preference to the combined evidence of the governors of the Bank of England. But it certainly would be more business-like to investigate the locality for myself. It is deuced slippery on a glacier, isn't it, though?'

I calmed the little lawyer's fears, and vigorously prodded the place where his conscience had proved tender till he agreed to accompany me to the Alitsch glacier. I did not intend to tell the ladies of our project till next morning, when I hoped to induce them to stay at the hotel while we put it into execution. But I found, on retiring that night, that my wife knew all about the catastrophe—the chambermaid at the inn having been very communicative to her upon the matter—and that both she and Miss Clote had made up their minds to visit the place. 'To tell you the truth, Fred., though I had quite forgotten the names of the Alitsch glacier and the Märjelensee, I have scarcely ever had poor Jane's accident out of my mind since I have been in Switzerland, though I would not have told you so for the world,

had not this happened; and now that we are so near to the spot, I should as soon think of neglecting to visit it, as of passing by the churchyard in which she lay buried. If the expedition is dangerous, then, of course, that is a different matter; and Minna and I should only be in the way.'

It was arranged, then, that if the guides should give leave, the ladies were to accompany us to the scene of last year's disaster; and they did give leave. Scores of men, and a good many ladies, had already visited it, at the conclusion of last year's season; and, in fact, we were compelled to understand that the Alitsch crevasse had become a sort of sensational exhibition. This shocked me excessively, and Nelly as much as myself. If,

To us,

The fools of habit, sweeter seems
To rest beneath the clover sod
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God,

than to 'lie fathom deep in brine, tossing with tangle and with shell'—how much more did we revolt against our lost one being buried in the thick-ribbed ice, and looked for, though unseen, by curious, careless eyes for year after year to come!

It was very early in the season, for Switzerland; no pilgrimage had as yet been made to the place since the autumn, and Nature, though so changeless in her general aspect, is very variable in such a region with respect to her lesser features; still, we were positively assured that the fatal spot would be recognisable; and on the morrow, accompanied by guides, carrying an abundance of ropes and a scaling-ladder, we four set out for it accordingly.

CHAPTER XXXV.—OUT OF THE CREVASSE.

As we were the only guests at the Eggischorn, we had plenty of assistance in addition to the guides we had brought from Brieg; but although every member of the local force had been familiar with the aspect of this fatal crevasse last year, they were now quite unable to find it—it was either so altered in its features as to be unrecognisable, or it had altogether disappeared. As the glacier was comparatively free from snow, however, we did not discontinue our researches, though it was evident to me, from what I remembered of Cecil's description of the catastrophe, that we were ranging wide of the spot where it had occurred.

'What is *that*, Fred., on the ice yonder?' inquired Nelly suddenly, pointing out some distant object which had attracted her sharp eyes.

Following the direction of her glance, I perceived something small and black lying by the side of a great yawn in the glacier. 'It is a man's cap,' said I, regarding it through an opera-glass which I had with me. 'How can it possibly have got there?'

'Easily enough,' said one from the inn. 'That is on the road to the Faulberg, and somebody must have dropped it last summer. No one, at all events, has passed that way this year; of that I am certain.'

When we reached the spot, which was not approached without some difficulty, the appearance of the cap—once apparently a wide-awake, but now crushed out of all shape—certainly bore out the man's suggestion. Perhaps it had not suffered much more than a cap would do if left out for a winter

upon Helvellyn, but it was certainly a deplorable object. The silken roof, with the name of the maker, had been rotted out by the snow; but on the leathern lining there were some letters written, which, though faint, were not wholly obliterated. Some of the party thought them O. M., and some, C. M.; but Mr Clote presently pulled out a magnifying-glass—ordinarily used for the perusal of old deeds, but of late employed to convince his niece that even moderate elevations were insurmountable—and decided that the letters were C. W.

'Why, those are Cecil's initials!' cried I. 'He may have lost his cap here in looking for his poor sister; and this, after all, may be the very crevasse we are in search of;' and thinking of what that gaping grave might contain, I gazed down into its cold, blue depths with reverent awe.

'Nay, sir,' said the same guide who had spoken before; 'that cannot be; for I know we are a long way from the spot pointed out by the young gentleman, which was under those steep rocks yonder, as I told you. I was one of those who accompanied him in his first search, and he was very positive about the place.'

'And yet,' said another, 'I do remember that, on that night when he woke us all up at the inn with the bad news, he did say something about having lost his cap.'

This was quite enough (notwithstanding all were agreed that we were far southward of the fatal spot) to make me insist upon the crevasse being examined. A belt was buckled round one of the chief guides, and a rope being fixed to it, he was lowered down very gradually, and in accordance with his own directions. Presently he gave a signal to be drawn up, which, of course, was obeyed. 'It is no use, sir,' said he, after a pull at my brandy-flask, for he was damp and cold. 'I went down the crevasse after the poor young lady last year, and feel quite confident that this is not the same. To begin with, the other had no bottom, and was thrice the size.'

'Have you reached the bottom of this one, then?' inquired I.

'Well, no, sir,' said the man frankly. 'I got to where the crevasse narrows a good deal; but it opens out, I see, below again, down to forty feet or so.'

The man had evidently a disinclination to pursue researches not only disagreeable in themselves, but which promised no result. As I looked wistfully round our little party, my eye lit upon a young porter, whose eager face—just like that of a small boy in class who knows his lesson, and sees the question coming down to him—seemed to say: 'Try me.'

'Will you go to the bottom of the crevasse, and satisfy us that there is nothing there?' said I.

This he at once agreed to do; and we lowered him, as we had lowered the other man, though, of course, paying out more rope. We could see him but very indistinctly; but the walls of ice gave back his voice to us quite clearly. Presently, he uttered a violent ejaculation, and we began to draw him up with haste, thinking that he had met with some accident. 'No, no,' cried he, in his rough patois, of which Miss Clote was our interpreter. 'More rope; there is something lying here.' In another minute, during which we kept an ominous silence, he added: 'It is a Dead Man.'

Imagine the effect of such a ghastly statement

delivered by its unseen utterer from the depths of that icy vault! Exclamations of horror burst from every mouth, but Nelly turned so deadly pale that I put my arm around her, thinking she was about to fall.

'There is no dead man there,' said the guide who had already descended; 'for we have had no one missing. The cold has touched Baudin's brain. It is not right to'—

'Pull up—stout and steady,' here interrupted Baudin from below; and we did so. The weight was much heavier than before.

'It is worse than anything you imagine,' whispered Nelly in my ear. 'O Fred, be firm, be calm! I know who it is that he is bringing with him.'

'Nay, nay,' said I comfortingly; 'dreadful as may be the spectacle, it is not poor Jane, we may be sure.'

'I know that,' answered she, with a shudder. 'But this is worse—ten thousand times worse. Be calm, be firm!'

I really thought that my poor darling was for the moment frightened out of her wits. It would have been excusable enough had she been so. I should have sent both the ladies back to the hotel ere this, if we could have spared the men to accompany them, but we could scarcely discontinue such work as that we had in hand, even for such a purpose. I motioned to Mr Clote to take my wife, and lead her, with Minna, a few paces off, but a fascination which I could not resist kept my own eyes fixed upon the crevasse. It was fortunate for brave young Baudin that there were plenty of hands at the rope beside my own, for the spectacle that was now presented fairly paralysed me. Along with Baudin, and side by side with him, was now emerging from the crevasse another form, another face—a face which, though it had suffered a sad change, was still as recognisable to me as that of my bride herself—a face, the owner of which had once bid me not to fear, for that I should surely see it again—the face of my cousin Cecil.

My brain reeled as I looked down at him, but I could not disbelieve my own eyes. It was undoubtedly he who had thus kept Tryst in such a ghastly fashion. I did not utter a syllable; some instinct repressed the cry that rose to my lips, and dried my tears at their source. If he had raised up an ice-cold finger, in sign of silence, I could not have felt more bound to keep my lips sealed for his sake, though my reason could not tell me why. The idea that was uppermost in the medley of weird thoughts that crowded on my mind was, that he from whom I had parted a few weeks ago—almost in anger, certainly with but little of that ancient friendship which had once seemed so inviolable—had come hither to the spot where he had lost his sister, and sought death by her side. I did not comprehend what the men were saying, in hushed tones, about the length of time that the body must needs have been lying in that icy charnel-house: one said, 'For years'; and one, 'No, no; but through the winter.' Evidently none of the Eggerhorn people recognised it for their visitor of the preceding season, as they took it up among them and began to carry it towards the inn. Nelly and Minna had hidden their faces in a close embrace, but Mr Clote was staring at me like one thunderstruck. I held my hand up and shook

my head; and he understood me, and was silent. Nothing more was said at present that had reference to this dread discovery, for our guides perceived that the nerves of all the party were shaken by it, and applied themselves solely to smooth the difficulties of the way. As for poor Nelly, she had fallen into a sort of half-swoon, and walked like one in her sleep; so her we carried. She recovered, however, before we reached the inn, which we found in great commotion. Fortunately, although the landlord observed something to us about the likeness of the corpse to the poor young lady who had lodged with him last year and perished near the same spot, he did not pursue the subject; and as we were supposed to be connected with the deceased, we were left quite to ourselves. It was a great relief to us all (even to Minna, though she had no such reasons for courting privacy as the rest of us) to find ourselves alone.

'Did I not tell you, Fred., that I knew whom we should find?' were Nelly's first disjointed, half-hysterical words.

'You did,' said I. 'But how, in Heaven's name, did you guess it was poor Cecil?'

'I knew it,' continued she, 'from the moment we found the cap with his initials in it. I bribed the porter to volunteer to descend the crevasse when the other man declined to do so. I would have gone down myself rather than have left him there. Oh, think of it, Fred., lying there all alone in the ice and snow of Alpine winter!' and she began to sob most pitifully.

'I don't understand all this,' said Mr Clote, looking from my wife to me. 'I parted from my unhappy client certainly not two months ago; and you talk of his having lain in that dreadful place throughout the winter.'

'Nelly is right, Mr Clote,' said I gravely, for I saw it all now. 'This matter, as my wife whispered ere I saw his face, is far worse than we imagine. It is not only Death that we have to face, but Deceit and Fraud.' Here I hesitated. 'Your niece can be relied on, I am sure?'

Minna rose to go, with a deep blush; but her uncle laid his hand upon her shoulders. 'The girl is true as steel,' said he. 'If the honour of your whole family should be placed in her hands, believe me, it would be safe.'

'I am about to place it there,' said I solemnly. 'If this body is that of my cousin Cecil, Mr Clote, where, think you, is Jane? You told me only yesterday that Cecil was benefited to the extent of four thousand pounds by his sister's death; how much would Jane have been benefited by that of Cecil?'

'Why, nothing—nothing at all; the estate would have then passed to you.'

'Just so. By personating Cecil, however, Jane has contrived to secure his fortune and her own as well.'

'Personating Cecil? You don't mean to tell me that my client—your cousin—whom I have had interviews with a dozen times, is a woman?—a chit of a girl in man's clothes. It is absolutely incredible, sir. No woman had ever such a head for business, to begin with.'

'My cousin Jane was always shrewd, Mr Clote,' said I, 'and somewhat too shrewd. I will stake my life that the fraud I have described has been put upon us, though much indeed yet remains to be explained. What a return has that woman

made for a brother's love!' Alas, thought I, if that poor cold breast lying yonder could feel a pang from human wrong-doing, how through and through would it be smitten now!

'A base return indeed,' mused the old lawyer; 'and with what guileful craft she has gone to work! It is certainly most fortunate that you fell in with me. You and your wife are interested parties, you see, but I can bear independent testimony with respect to identification. Not, however, that she'll venture to fight such a question for a moment. You'll not make it a criminal matter, I suppose, unless you think'—

'Of course not,' interrupted I; 'I should not dream of prosecuting Jane, for her poor brother's sake.—What is it you mean?' for there was a look in the lawyer's face significant of something amiss, worse even than what we already knew.

'You might do it for his sake. I mean, that it is just possible that there has been foul play in the matter—as to the way, I mean, in which your cousin came by his end.'

My blood seemed to stand still in my veins as I listened to his words. 'If I thought that,' cried I with vehemence, 'the law should have its way to the uttermost with her. I myself'—

'Hush, hush! for we do not think that,' interrupted Nelly, rising, and laying her hand upon my arm. 'If any one has cause to complain that Cousin Jane has been her enemy, I have; and it is I who say that she is innocent of any such charge. When Cecil (as I thought her to be) was striving to prevent my marriage all he could, and (as was pretended) for his sister's sake, I never doubted even then that sister and brother had loved one another dearly, and I do not doubt it now. Jane never loved but two persons on earth'—here Nelly glanced at me with tender significance—'but she loved them with all her heart, and one of them was Cecil.'

'That may be as you say, my dear Mrs Fred,' said Mr Clote thoughtfully; 'but I look to the business aspect of the matter, while you regard it from a sentimental point of view. Now, to my eyes, that deed of gift to your husband of all Cecil's fortune, except a bare thousand pounds—which was probably retained for the very reason that if she had given all, it would have looked too like restitution—the execution of that deed, I say, seems to me to argue acute remorse.'

'No, no, Mr Clote,' continued Nelly; 'it was not that, though I cannot undertake to say what it was. It may have a suspicious look to you; to me it is simply inexplicable: and remember'—here she turned to me again—'that deed was not drawn up until our marriage-day was fixed. No; Jane never harmed her brother—I will stake my life, nay, more, dear Fred., your love, on that; but when he met his death yonder, so suddenly, a dreadful instinct must have seized her to take advantage of it. If you and I had not been engaged to one another, it is my belief Jane would never have done so; but she could not endure the thought that your inheritance of Cecil's wealth would enable you to marry me.'

'It needs a woman to explain a woman's conduct, uncle, dear,' said Minna softly: 'you may be sure that Mrs Wray is right.'

'But what are we to do?' ejaculated Mr Clote. 'You have no right to indulge in sentiment, you know—that is, to compound a felony, at the expense

of the law of the land. You don't mean to say that you are going to let this sort of thing go on? This masquerading cousin of yours is not to be allowed to keep the property that has been entailed upon heirs-male, I suppose; you'll surely stop that.'

'Let us sleep a night upon it, Mr Clote,' replied I, quoting a favourite maxim of the lawyer's own. 'We are all of us far too much excited, and some too pained and distressed, to exercise any sober judgment on it just now.'

For my part, indeed, I was scarcely master of myself; for while we were thus talking about Cecil's property, was not his own dear self, or rather the poor battered shell that had once held him, lying without, under a shed, stared at, perchance, by prying irreverent eyes, or tended by unloving alien hands at least! I did not venture to visit him, however, lest my emotions should betray me, until nightfall, when the superstitious fears of others made them glad enough to leave him to me alone. I shall never forget that solemn interview—if a meeting between the dead and the living can so be termed. The moon was shining through the windowless shed, and fell full upon the rough coffin in which he had been already placed. The lid was not yet fastened down, and I took it off to look my last upon him. A change for the worse had come over it, even during the last few hours that the body had been exposed to the air; but I could still recognise the face that had always worn a smile for me, and never an angry look. On his finger was a poor ring I had given him when he had left Gatcombe, and I remembered, for the first time, how moved his sister had been when I asked her what had become of it. 'You promised me,' I had said, 'that it should never leave your hand;' and she had made some lame excuse for having lost it. But Cecil had kept his promise—warm-hearted, honest Cecil, who had been wronged so cruelly in the opinion of his friend, and well nigh despised. I protest that I was more wroth with Jane upon that account—the injustice which her deception had caused us to do him—than at all else. To have thought him (of all men) avaricious, mean, morose, and he all the while lying lost and dead in his grave of ice—how his dumb face reproved me now!

FROM PALENQUE TO PETEN.

A FEW years ago, M. Arthur Morelet, a French gentleman of extensive scientific acquirements, made up his mind to explore one of the most secluded and unknown portions of the earth: that vast region which lies between Chiapas, Tabasco, Yucatan, and the republic of Guatemala, comprises a considerable portion of each of those states, and is marked on the map of Central America either by a blank, or by conjectural mountains, lakes, and rivers. It is a land full of attraction to the fancy, fed by our scanty knowledge of its nameless ranges of mountains, its great river Usumasinta, with its thousand tributaries; its vast plains, forests, and savannahs; its deep valleys, rich with the gorgeous and lavish vegetation of the tropics, its plateaus dark with pines and treelike ferns. We see, in imagination, its broad, beautiful lakes peopled with strange fishes, and studded with islands where the forests hide, under their still, sweltering tangle, mysterious and gigantic buildings, of form unknown in any

other land, strangled stone enigmas which would tell us, could we read them, of extinct peoples and a dead faith. Within this mysterious region, on some distant unknown tributary of the Usumasinta, the popular tradition of Guatemala and Chiapas places that great aboriginal city, with its white walls shining like silver in the sun, which the cura of Quiché affirmed to the traveller, Stephens, he had seen with his own eyes, from the tops of the mountains of Quesattenango. Through a great part of this region, Cortes struggled with almost superhuman endurance, on his march from Mexico into Honduras, and at the mysterious Lake of Itzaes he left his wounded horse, commending it to the care of the simple people, who revered and tended it with zeal so little according to knowledge, that the animal died of starvation in the face of such sumptuous fare as fowls, fruit, and flowers, spread for its delectation. Nearly two centuries later, the Spaniards found the image of the horse, erected beside the lake, elevated to the rank of a god, and invested with the powers which control the thunder and lightning. During those two centuries, the Land of War, as the Spaniards fity named it, remained unconquered.

'Expedition after expedition,' says Mrs Squier, 'was fitted out in accordance with the imperial mandate, only to be utterly cut off, or driven back in disaster and dismay. The history of its ultimate reduction was written by the chronicler Villaguerie with minute detail, but it exists only in parchment scrolls, under the seal of a strange tongue, in the libraries of the curious and the learned. But since he wrote, down to the present day, neither historian nor traveller, priest nor soldier, has ventured into that sinister region. The little knowledge once possessed of the country has been lost; the very names of its people have almost passed from the memory of the present generation, and the Spanish establishments themselves, which the genius of Ursa pushed forward into the disputed territory, have been left to almost utter isolation and forgetfulness.'

Even in Guatemala, to which this unknown region nominally belongs, the vaguest notions exist of Peten, and the great Lake of Itza, on an island of which, on the site of the metropolis of the Itzaes, Ursa founded a town. It is not so wonderful that Peten should be unfrequented by the inhabitants of Guatemala, when one considers that in order to get there they would have to traverse 'one hundred and fifty-six leagues of distance, involving a journey of twenty-nine days, ten of which are through an unbroken wilderness, which can only be traversed on foot, across rivers frequently unfordable, and wide tracts of country, often inundated, and over mountains so steep, that in some places they can only be ascended by rude ladders, formed by notching the trunks of forest trees, and placing them against the declivities, to say nothing of the total absence of shelter and provisions, and the danger of attack from hostile Indians.' But, what no one in the neighbouring states would undertake, a French scholar crossed the Atlantic to do. He plunged boldly into the recesses of the beautiful unknown *Tierra di Guerra*, and brought its physical

* *Travels in Central America: including Accounts of some Regions unexplored since the Conquest: from the French of the Chevalier Morelet. By Mrs Squier. Trübner & Co.*

characteristics, its quaint people, and its natural history within the circle of modern knowledge.

A week's journey through the lagoons of Campeachy, with their strange reptile population and pest of insects, a slow-poling canoe voyage, in which the wonderful forests pass dreamily by the traveller, brought M. Morelet to Palenque. Such wonders of vegetation had already been disclosed, that he prepared for his tramp through the forest to the ruins with composure, which, however, was occasionally disturbed by what he saw, for instance, an *arum*, whose leaves he measured. Each was two yards in length by one and a half in breadth, and capable of affording shade to three persons! The density of the forest concealed the ruins until M. Morelet and his companion were close upon them; and on ascending a steep elevation, they found themselves at the portal of a vast edifice, until that instant hidden. There is more mystic solemnity attached to the absolutely obscure antiquity of these records of the past, in the New World, than to even the most venerable records of the Old. The latter have an unbroken sequence of tradition and history; they are links in the great process of the evolution of time and events; we understand, or think we understand them. But these New World mysteries baffle us, existing in their unfathomable antiquity side by side with all that is most modern, and most full of change, evidences of extinct races which existed, unconscious of one half the planet, as one half the planet was of them. The travellers found themselves in front of the building called the Palace, of which they took possession, and where they made their abode for a fortnight. From the platform crowned by the vast, silent ruins, a great ocean of tropical forest, the study of only a few of whose forms would absorb a lifetime, stretches out illimitably, and the awful solitudes are peopled with the rarest and most beautiful of creatures. 'We hunted,' says the author, 'we spread snares for wild animals, we collected plants, shells, and butterflies, of which there were infinite varieties, without ever becoming weary of admiring the beauties of nature, or of wandering among the ruins which have kept the secret of their origin so well. The mornings were delightful. Humming-birds darted among the vines which twined themselves around the walls of the old palace, while green and purple dragon-flies darted about in capricious flight. The guats emerged in clouds from the depth of the undergrowth, the woodpecker commenced his ringing stroke on the trunks of decaying trees, the whole forest became full of the sights and sounds of life and motion. But at mid-day everything became again silent and motionless; all animation seemed suspended, beneath the ardour of the solar rays, and only the monotonous murmur of the river, which flows at the foot of the ruins, broke the death-like silence.' With the night came the mysterious sounds which make the Indians afraid of the ruins, which they believe to be haunted; tiny winged lamps float in the atmosphere, first like brilliant sparks, then losing themselves in long trains of light; and indefinable voices, soft and sweet like bird-music, mysterious as the accents of an unknown tongue, rise from the forest. 'I seemed,' says the author, 'to detect life in all things around me; the plants, the trees, the old walls themselves appeared to live. My ears listened with rapt attention to this strange harmony, and

my eyes questioned the darkness in vain, to discover the beings who thus manifested their existence. Now it was like the silvery tinkle of a little bell, or a plaintive voice calling in the distance, then a rustling sound, and next a sob from the interior of the ruins. Again, it was like a thousand gentle whispers, a thousand little cadences. At one time I surprised a frog on the staircase, whose croakings had mystified us, from its resemblance to the barking of a dog. Sometimes a sudden breath of wind would cause the tall trees to tremble, and make our fire blaze up more brightly. The shadows would move about, the dog would raise her head, and we would listen and wait, full of nervous suspense. And when, at a later hour, we left the gallery for our subterranean bed-chamber, the dying embers of our fire would cast a red glare down the steep stairway leading to the forest, and on the neighbouring vegetation, causing the darkness beyond to appear all the more profound, and to throw out in greater distinctness the little insect lights which glittered like stars upon its ebon bosom.'

One day, M. Morelet, following, like the monk in that legend which has its corresponding myth in every language, the sweet lure of a bird's voice, of such strange, clear, limpid melody, as, the Indians say, is only produced by one bird, who sings among ruins, lost himself in the awful, beautiful forest. One follows this Prince Camaralzaman of science with breathless interest, as the song tempts him on and on, amid the wilderness of solemn and gorgeous beauty, until, finding the path unfamiliar, he reaches an eminence, climbs a tree, can discern no trace of the ruins where he dwells, and is 'terrified in the extreme to behold only an ocean of verdure before his eyes, extending to the very verge of the horizon, and seemingly limitless.' At the cost of much fatigue and mental suffering, he got back to the Palace.

They resumed their river-journey after a detour to San Geronimo and its neighbourhood, where the population seems to be letting itself sink out of existence through sheer laziness. The *hacienda* life of the region closely approaches absolute stagnation; the stillness of the logwood forests of Campeachy broods over the scene. Men content themselves with the barest necessities of life, and the one recreation of the women is thus described: 'At sunset, groups of women with bronzed complexions and floating hair, half-naked, but glittering with tinsel, throng the paths leading from the *hacienda*, to bathe in the still waters of the lagoons. They chant melancholy and drowsy songs, the melody of which is doubtless inspired by the gloom of everything around, though the words seem to belong to some more fortunate clime.' This is the translation of the Spanish words:

Oh, the world,
How full of beauty!
What a pity,
I must die!

'The traveller,' says the author, 'who has passed through Tabasco can never forget the plaintive melody of these accents, which are continually heard in every habitable spot.' The soil of San Geronimo is exceedingly fertile, yet there is not a fruit tree or a useful vegetable in the whole district. The lagoons swarm with fish, but all that are eaten are imported. In the midst of herds of cattle, the inhabitants dine on beef salted

in the United States, and drink the nauseous water of the swamps. And yet, these Creole Spaniards are the descendants of the Conquistadores, and a Balboa, who knows his origin too, is a simple herdsmen in a *hacienda*.

Many extraordinary and interesting reptiles are found in this locality. Between Tabasco and Peten, the forests, hardly ever trodden by human foot, are magnificent, the trees being of vast circumference and prodigious altitude; and the interlacing vines, the marvellous growths, quite bewildering. The ground is covered with myriads of flowers, of which several kinds are of immense size. M. Morelet thus describes one: 'We frequently observed the *Aristolochia grandiflora*, often from twelve to fifteen inches in diameter. Before its development, the calyx resembles the figure of a swan suspended by its bill, but when it is full blown, it assumes the form of the conventional cap of Liberty, turned up with a violet velvet lining. Its great size, sombre colour, and rank virulent odour, which deters the traveller from touching it, have led the Spaniards to call it *montera del demonio*, the devil's cap.' Fruits are scarce in the grand forests; birds and beautiful insects abound. The journey through these forests is one of inconceivable toil and hardship, and the traveller must not rely on any product of nature for his support. He is almost as ill off for food as in the wilderness; and but for vines, whose sap refreshes him at intervals, must suffer thirst as well. Gradually the dense forests alternate with savannahs, and are traversed by beaten paths. They are then rather groves than forests, enamelled with flowers, peopled with birds, perfumed with the most delightful odours. At last these groves disappear, and the exhausted travellers find themselves on the banks of a blue lake, smooth as a mirror, in which a small stony island rises gently five hundred yards from the shore. The lake is the mysterious Itza, or Peten of the geographers, and the island is that described by Cortes as the stronghold of the Itzacs. The little town, which had supplanted the Indian city, is that of Flores, the capital of the district, and the point to which M. Morelet had directed his weary journey all the way across the Atlantic, through the swamps of Campeachy and the wildernesses of Tabasco.

Wonderful natural beauty, extraordinary profusion of animal and vegetable life, extreme simplicity of manners, and entire isolation, physical and mental, from all the rest of the world, on the part of the inhabitants—these are the chief characters of the romantic place which the traveller had reached with such difficulty, and where he had a long and dangerous illness. Here he made valuable additions to his collection, for all the children in the place were employed in finding 'specimens' for him. Lizards, birds, serpents, insects, they brought them in large numbers; their parents dispensed them from going to school, that they might devote themselves to the remunerative task. The schoolmaster vainly remonstrated; the men actually took to the pursuit of specimens; the women brought the produce of their poultry-yards, and encumbered M. Morelet's dwelling with their indiscriminate contributions. One day, a foraging party brought him, in triumph, a live crocodile! During the whole of his sojourn, the only branch of industry ever successfully introduced into Flores flourished. The town is

irregularly built; the dwellings, for the most part, are simple huts, thatched with palm-leaves. The use of chimneys and windows is unknown. In the streets, there are neither shops nor workmen, nor is there a public market. Every one depends on his own production, or on exchanges with his neighbours, for food. Here is a picture not without its attraction in this toil-worn, money-loving age.

'If any one has need of money, he prepares some article of domestic consumption—such as bread, chocolate, or candles—and sends his children about with them from hut to hut in search of a purchaser. At long intervals, some enterprising man takes a cow or horse to Belize, and exchanges it there for a petty package of English goods. Very little suffices for a population whose only ambition is to live without labour. No one ever thinks of acquiring wealth. Destitute of ambition, and without strong passion of any kind, the certainty of a sufficiency for bare existence is all they require to make them happy, and this is assured to them by the extent and fertility of the land. Possession is the only title to the soil they recognise. Any one who clears a piece of ground makes use of it so long as he pleases; and if any dispute arises as to its ownership, it is settled by the paternal fiat of the corregidor. . . . Instead of the sounds of the hammer and the sugar-mill, one's ears are filled constantly with the harmony of musical instruments. As soon as the sun goes down, and the evening breezes set in, the town is full of sounds of mirth and hilarity, which continue till the night is far advanced. The desire for novelty, improvement, or change never enters into the thoughts of the inhabitants. Every one having received the same amount of education, and enjoying in an equal degree the privilege of doing nothing, the most perfect equality exists in society, which is not troubled by the pretensions of its members on the score of birth, learning, or fortune.'

Wealth, want, and crime are equally unknown. There are no robberies and no murders at Flores. The people are very hospitable, very gentle, entirely ignorant of all that is taking place in the world outside their own beautiful nook of it. A few of them expressed a wish to learn something from M. Morelet, but their tranquil incapacity of application rendered it impossible to teach them. They know their own ignorance, but they like it. Their entertainments are very simple, and no invitation is needed. The chords of the *marimba* struck before a door denote that the *tertulia* is to be held there, and every one goes. The *alcalde* and the *corregidor* alternate in the same *fandango* with the meanest citizen. The mother succeeds the daughter, the negress the white woman. Rank, age, caste, all the conditions which elsewhere separate society, seem to be confounded here. Occasionally, during the progress of the *tertulia*, the *marimba* is allowed a little repose. And then the women take up the melody, in the way of lovely little songs, which they sing to their guitars. The men join in, the concert becomes general, and when the chorus is at its height, it stops suddenly, the *marimbas* strike up, and the *fandango* commences in earnest, the spectators keeping time with both hands and feet. It is to be hoped that the condition of these innocent and enviable people has not materially changed since M. Morelet's time, and we may assume that it has not, as no one has heard anything about them.

The mysterious lake of Itza, in one division of which Flores is situated, is without an outlet. Its circumference is thirty-six leagues, its depth more than thirty fathoms. No river, not even a brook, flows into it. On the shore opposite to Flores is a spacious cavern, adorned with beautiful stalactites, which the inhabitants of Peten believe to be the finest cavern in the world. Storms are terrible upon the beautiful lake. When the north-east winds sweep the clouds from the Atlantic towards Peten, the waters become discoloured, the banks are undermined and washed away, and the waves roll in on its shores like those of the ocean. Woe to the oarsman whom the tempest surprises! His canoe may be seen drifting on the surface of the waters, but they never give up their dead.

More than forty years ago, some inhabitants of Peten, journeying towards the coast, on the course of the Mopan river, were greatly astonished to discover, in the direction of the sea, a city of which they had never before heard. It was the English colony of Belize. To that place, hardly better known now than it was then, M. Morelet took his way on leaving Flores, dreaming of the mysterious Alps which yet rose blue and distant in his adventurous path to Guatemala.

THE FRUITS OF OBSTINACY.

'Now, do you not think, Medelaw, that you are a little, just a little obstinate?' asked the vicar, leaning back in his chair with the smile of a martyr, and joining the tips of all his fingers.

The question was Pony-races, which the vicar wanted to suppress, a feat which was impossible without the aid of Medelaw, who owns the greater part of our parish, and rules the rest by right of purse. 'They undo all my work,' said the vicar.

'The poor have few pleasures enough, and I am not going to diminish them,' said Medelaw.

Rogers and I were churchwardens; we agreed with Medelaw theoretically, but sided with the clergyman practically. The pony-races were a nuisance, flooding our quiet village once a year with a crowd of roughs from the very slummiest of the slums of London, and giving an impetus to tippling, swearing, and other social evils—the effects of which were perceptible all the rest of the twelvemonth. Then the races were not 'on the square.' The principal prize was given by the landlord of the biggest pot-house, who invariably found a pony, entered in another name, to win it. In short, there was no sport in the meeting; the racing was a farce, and low debauchery the sole real attraction.

'Come and dine with me, and talk it over,' said Rogers; and gave us a most softening repast, a bottle of port, which was benevolence melted down, and a cigar, which I would back against music for savage breast soothing. And still we were not happy, for Medelaw stuck to his text; and at length the despairing vicar made the above prefatory remark.

'Obstinate?' said Medelaw; 'I am happy to say that I am. If I were not obstinate, my income at this moment would be two hundred and fifty pounds per annum, and I should be working hard eight hours a day to earn it.'

'Tell us that,' cried Rogers: 'I never heard of obstinacy paying before.'

'Because, when it pays, you call it firmness,' said Medelaw: 'however, if I am to be autobiographical, I must be exact. I forgot that in addition to my salary I should have had the interest on what was left of my capital, and was thinking of what I had to live on when my inheritance came to me—ten thousand pounds it should have been, but there were one or two legacies, and the probate duty. Bless those unanticipated legacies! Bless the probate duty! I held other sentiments at the time, but they made my fortune. If it had not been for those deductions, I should have let my property lie quietly in the funds; but having to sell a part, to satisfy claims and taxes, I got vexed, and determined to realise the whole, and have a bit of a gamble, so as to make up that confounded piece which had been bitten out, or lose more. Some friends remonstrated, which made me more determined, and my first banker's balance was a noble one.'

'The question was, what gamble should I go for—mines, railways, or miscellaneous? While I was hesitating, I had to go to Liverpool for the house in which I was clerk, and trying to sleep on the journey, I overheard a conversation between two long-headed Scotch-looking fellow-passengers.

"Now, thou art a good practical engineer," said one of them, who was distinguished by drab pantaloons and gaiters, and a broad-brimmed hat; "what dost thou really think of this Dalton Canal and Steam Ferry scheme?"

"Why," replied the other, "I think that if the management of it were in your and my hands, or in those of men I could trust, I would put every penny I could raise into it."

"Thou much confirmest my own ideas upon the subject."

"The present rate of traffic would give a profit of ten per cent., I mean reckoning the goods conveyed annually, partly by the river, which is often un navigable; partly by wagon, and across the estuary by open boats; and it is a very moderate computation to assume that the transport would be quadrupled in two years."

"Thou reckonest the percentage on the proposed capital; but will that suffice?"

"Suffice? I never saw a simpler bit of engineering in my life. The ten pound deposit to be paid on shares ought to be ample to set the whole thing going, without calling another penny."

"That, I see, is held out by the prospectus; thou thinkest, then, that it will be adhered to?"

"I cannot say that: I do not like the men who are getting the company up; there is no knowing what tricks those fellows may play."

"Nay; let us not be uncharitable; most men are honest when they can be so with profit."

"Ay, if they were capitalists, I should have no fear, but there is not a substantial man amongst them. And how many a good thing have I seen ruined, simply because its directors could not afford to wait for the legitimate profits, but must needs snatch at what they could secure at the moment."

"There is reason in what thou sayest, though in this instance I suspect that different tactics may be pursued. If thou and I, and one or two others whom I know, were to take the opportunity, afforded by the fact of the promoters of this scheme needing capital, to become large shareholders, it seemeth to me that we might manage to exercise a certain influence and supervision, which would

prevent a measure of great public utility from being mismanaged."

"And secure a handsome reward for our patriotic enterprise. It is worth thinking of."

"And acting upon, if I mistake not."

And merrily chuckled the Quaker's friend,
And merrily chuckled the Quaker.

'You will easily understand that this conversation was likely to impress a young man looking out for investments, strongly. I formed one of my powerful resolutions on the spot; into the Dalton Canal and Steam Ferry my money should go, if I were ruined by it. My friends and relatives expostulated, pleaded, taunted, oburgated in vain. The most influential of them had got a first-rate mortgage for me, five per cent., and perfect security; and he put the folly of my preferring a gambling venture so clearly and forcibly before me, that nothing but this mania for not changing when I have once made up my mind prevented my embracing his offer with gratitude.

"I have had experience in these matters, and you have none," said he, "and I tell you that you might just as well put your money on the first favourite for the Derby, as throw it into a concern which emanates from the quarter which this canal business does."

His words gave me a cold shiver, but I was firm, and replied that we should see; and he was so exasperated by my obstinacy, as to hint that an intention he had once had of inserting my name in his will must now be reconsidered, for where was the use of leaving money to one who wilfully threw it away? I confess that I hoped in my heart that the company would never be formed, so thoroughly did he frighten me. But it was; twenty-five pound shares; one pound to be paid on allotment, nine pounds more after the lapse of a few months. I took three hundred of them, which indeed was as many as they would allot me, paid up my three thousand pounds, and transferred the remainder of my little capital to the deposit account at the bank, so as to get some small interest while waiting for calls, if any were made.

'Well, the bullying I endured for the next few years you would hardly believe; my principal persecutor being a solicitor, who thought I wanted to marry his daughter, which I did, rather! The shares rose: now was my time to part from them with a profit: they fell; what a warning to get rid of them while it was feasible! But I stuck to my resolution, and held on. The canal was completed, the steam ferry commenced working, and the shares—sank steadily. I went down to discover the reason, but without success; on the contrary, I was puzzled beyond measure, for the affair appeared to be prospering to such a degree, that I confidently anticipated a dividend next quarter. The quarter came, and with it, not a dividend, but a *call*. And so matters went on; call after call, until all the capital was paid up; there was no return, and the shares fell to zero: and yet the traffic seemed to be increasing.

'My friends troubled me no longer with their advice, for it had become useless; almost all my little capital was sunk in a concern which did not yield a penny: all they could do was to shake their heads, say that it was my own fault, they had warned me how it would be, and hold me up as a scarecrow to others; and that they did.

'Certain strangers, however, were kinder, for I received more than one letter informing me, that though my shares were of no value in the market, there were parties who were willing to make me a small private offer; and as I took no notice of these, a gentleman called upon me one day, and entered into a long explanation of certain reasons which induced a client of his to desire to hold a number of these shares, which were worthless to any one else, in his hands. What he said may have been very plausible, but I did not pay much attention to it, for in the speaker I recognised one of those fellow-travellers, the one who was not a Quaker, who had originally put the idea of investing in the affair into my head; and hope burst out afresh in my breast. I thanked him very much, lamented the constitutional obstinacy which prevented my taking advantage of his kind and disinterested offer; and when he was gone, hurried off to a broker, and tried to buy more shares with the remnant of capital left me. *I could not get one*; and from that hour, I considered that my fortune was made.

'I was right. When the wire-pullers who had been bearing the market and securing the shares found that they could positively get no more, the Dalton Canal and Steam Ferry suddenly became a great success. Twenty per cent. was paid that very year; the next, I got fifty and a bonus. I have been a lucky speculator since then, but never hit on so good a thing by my wits, as I was forced into by sheer obstinacy. So, you see, I hug the quality out of gratitude, and it is of no use arguing with me when I have once put down my foot.

'I am afraid not,' said the vicar with a sigh.

—'What do you say, Rogers?'

'I say that if it were donkey-races or mule-races that we were trying to suppress, I could better understand Medelaw's advocacy.'

CHARTREUSE.

(LIQUEUR.)

Who could refuse
Green-eyed Chartreuse?
Liqueur for heretics,
Turks, Christians, or Jews;
For beggar or queen,
For monk or for dean;
Ripened and mellow
(The green, not the yellow),
Give it its dues,
Gay little fellow,
Dressed up in green!
I love thee too well, O
Laughing Chartreuse!
O the delicate hues
That thrill through the green!—
Colours which Greuze
Would die to have seen!
With thee would De Musset
Sweeten his muse:
Use, not abuse,
Bright little fellow!
(The green, not the yellow).
O the taste and the smell! O
Never refuse
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